



GEN

SEP 22 1978

ALLEN COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY



3 1833 01821 8633

ml

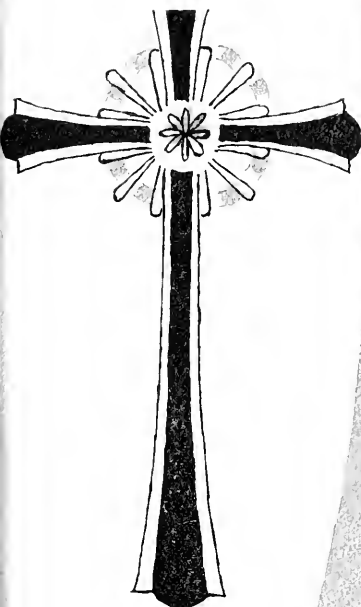
FORT WAYNE. A-G.

(Churches)

GC

977.202

F77FIC



First Presbyterian Church in Fort Wayne

Shawnee Branch Library
5600 Noll Avenue
Fort Wayne, Indiana 46806



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN FORT WAYNE

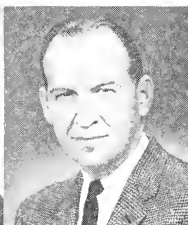
Reprinted from an original paper
published by the
Allen County-Fort Wayne Historical Society.
Permission granted by the Society

Prepared by the Staff of the
Public Library of Fort Wayne and Allen County
1959

Board of Trustees of Fort Wayne Community Schools



M. R. Tunari



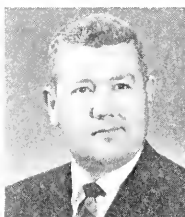
Charles Slater



Gordon Reeves



Max G. Scott



Eugene A. Yergens, Treasurer



Willard Shambaugh, President



Mrs. William C. Rostetter, Jr.
Secretary

The Sixty - Fifth Annual Report is published under the direction of
the governing Boards of the Public Library of Fort Wayne and Allen County.

Public Library Board for Allen County

The members of this Board include the members of the Board of Trustees of
the Fort Wayne Community Schools (with the same officers) together with
the following citizens chosen from Allen County outside the corporate city
of Fort Wayne.



Gerald W. Marsches



James E. Graham



Mrs. Frank Dulin



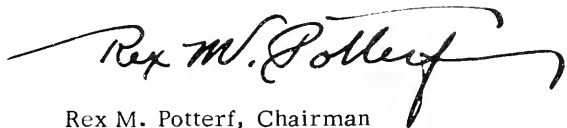
Mrs. Charles Reynolds

FOREWORD

The Public Library files of newspapers published in Fort Wayne are more or less complete from 1841 to the present. In making a comprehensive collection of items from these papers which would serve as a basis for various episodes, aspects, and periods of Fort Wayne history, I observed numerous references, beginning in the 1840's and continuing through the Civil War, to the First Presbyterian Church. After a time other denominations were mentioned, but most news articles about religious bodies during that early period concerned the First Presbyterian Church. Not only did it exert a vigorous religious influence on early Fort Wayne, but many of the town's political, industrial, business, and social leaders belonged to that Church. When all usable materials throughout that period were selected from the local papers, typed, and filed, it was evident that the First Presbyterian Church was a community factor of more than considerable importance.

These early newspaper typescripts, together with the historical works of Jesse Lynch Williams, Charles J. Worden, and Reverend George W. Allison, constituted a rather substantial foundation for the following historical sketch.

Mrs. Elizabeth Porter Leslie assisted materially in coordinating these source materials. Later, Miss Alene Godfrey and James T. Broderick collaborated to locate background material, to check local histories and directories, and to verify facts, dates, and names. Mrs. Eleanor Blume provided the cover and text illustrations and planned the layout of the publication. The editors organized all available materials, delineated a chronological story of the origins and growth of Presbyterianism in Fort Wayne during the nineteenth century, and attempted to evaluate its impact on the community.



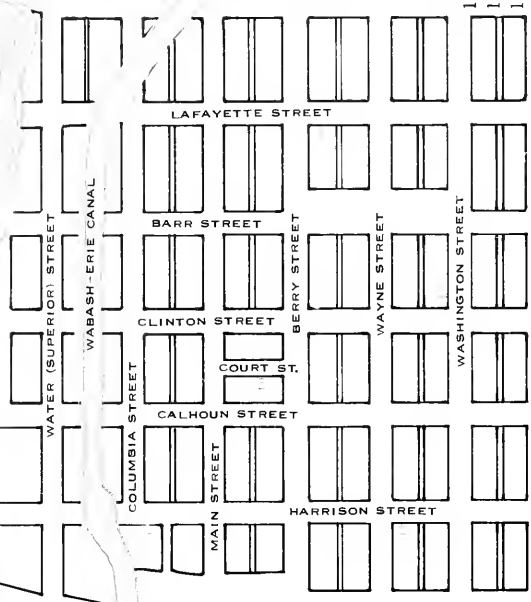
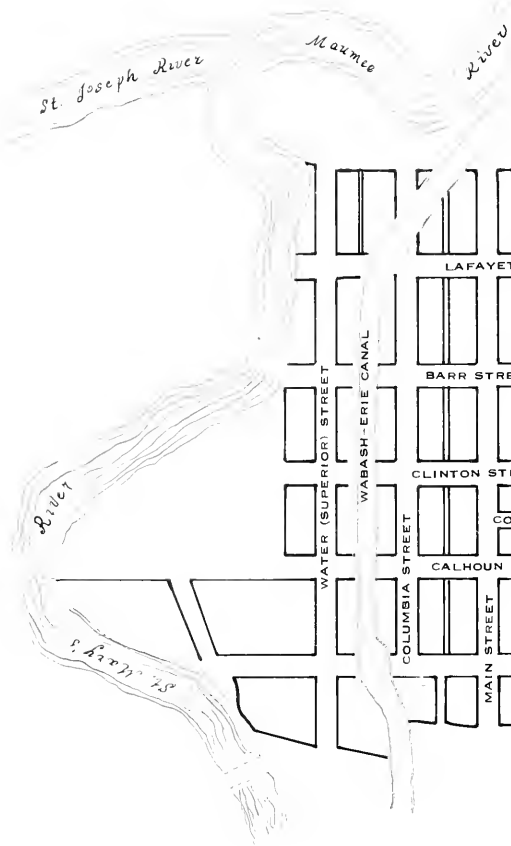
Rex M. Potterf, Chairman
Historical Research Associates
Allen County-Fort Wayne Historical Society

INTRODUCTION

During the week of April 22-29, 1956, impressive services marked the dedication of the fifth house of worship of the First Presbyterian Church of Fort Wayne. Distinguished guests, clergy, and prominent laymen united to observe the one-hundred-twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the church in the Summit City.

In 1956 the congregation numbered twenty-five hundred members, who had contributed two million dollars to construct the beautiful modified early American edifice at Wayne and Webster streets. The area of Fort Wayne then encompassed twenty-eight square miles, and the population approximated one hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants in forty-six thousand homes.

The story of the humble beginnings and the difficult undertakings of the founders of the First Presbyterian Church and their successors constitutes a record of faith and courage in this community in the nineteenth century. To understand fully the numerous obstacles and vicissitudes experienced by the Church and its congregation, the reader must turn back the pages of local history to the early decades of the last century.



LEGEND

1. Rude shelter of boards (1831)
2. Brick schoolroom
3. Masonic Hall (until 1833)
4. Carpenter shop
5. Small room
6. Franklin House
7. First Court House
8. First church building (1837), 334 East Berry
9. Church building (1847-82), 200 East Berry
10. Court House (1882-83)
11. Temple (1883-86)
12. Church (1886), 201 East Washington

Places of worship of the First Presbyterian Church

FORT WAYNE, 1795-1820

By the Treaty of Greenville, August 3, 1795, the Indians ceded all southern Ohio and southeastern Indiana to the United States. In return for the Indian concessions, the federal government promised the red men ninety-five hundred dollars worth of goods annually. The same treaty designated as American territory an area six miles square at the confluence of the St. Mary's, St. Joseph, and Maumee rivers. General Anthony Wayne had constructed a fort on the site in the fall of 1794.

Thus Fort Wayne became a part of the Indian factory system. At the fort the government factor exchanged goods with the Indians in return for furs, skins, bear's grease, beeswax, and other native products. Many differences arose. Unprincipled profitseeking traders brought in whisky and firearms.

As the Indians consumed ever-increasing quantities of "fire-water," they degenerated rapidly. Chief Little Turtle vigorously opposed the acceptance of the white man's values by his Miami warriors. In 1796-97, accompanied by his son-in-law, Captain William Wells, he visited the cities of the eastern seaboard; during his visit with President Washington in Philadelphia, he urged prohibition of the liquor traffic with the Indians.

After a lengthy stay in Philadelphia, Little Turtle and his party traveled to Baltimore and were received with great kindness at the Yearly Meeting of the Society of Friends. Little Turtle made an appeal to the church authorities to use their influence to stop the shipment of liquors into the Indian country and to encourage the red men to cultivate the soil.

In response to his plea, the Society sent Gerard T. Hopkins, George Ellicott, and Philip Dennis, a practical farmer, on a mission to Fort Wayne in 1804. According to their reports to Philadelphia, they found that religious observance of the Sabbath day was ignored both in the fort and in the village. This is the first recorded visit of Protestant missionaries to the little village

of Fort Wayne.

The next Protestant minister to arrive in Fort Wayne was the Presbyterian chaplain, Reverend Matthew G. Wallace, who accompanied the army when General William Henry Harrison marched to the relief of the little garrison besieged by the Indians and British in 1812. Mr. Wallace conducted regular religious services for the soldiers.

Colonel Josiah N. Vose was the last commander of the fort (1816-19) and one of the few local military leaders who publicly professed Christianity. He did not tolerate unchristian behavior and assembled his men each Sunday to read the Scriptures and to talk about religion. Colonel John Johnston, the Indian agent, attended the services with his family and later wrote, "The conduct of Colonel Vose can only be appreciated by persons familiar with the allurements and temptations of military life."

On April 19, 1819, the fort--the last army post east of the Mississippi--was evacuated. A few French families or half-Indian families inhabited the isolated village nearby. Life was rugged, and supplies were scarce. Food was coarse; wild game was roasted over the open fire or at the fireplace. The community leaders included the Indian agent, the interpreters, the government land office agent, and the trading post proprietors. Major Benjamin F. Stickney succeeded Colonel Johnston as Indian agent in 1819.

During 1818, treaties with the Miami at St. Mary's, Ohio, granted valuable land in the region of the fort to the United States government. At that time the tiny settlement at the junction of the three rivers had less than thirty log cabins and a population approximating two hundred.

Before the government could offer sections of land to prospective settlers, the authorities sent out Captain James Riley, a civil engineer, to survey the newly acquired land. After completing his survey, Captain Riley surveyed a route for a possible canal between the Wabash and Maumee rivers. To friends he wrote:

The country around is very fertile. The situation is commanding and healthful, and here will arise a town of great importance, which must become a depot of immense trade. The fort is now only a small stockade. . . . As soon as the land is offered for sale, I have no doubt but inhabitants will pour in from all

quarters to this future throughfare between the East and the Mississippi River.'

A few enterprising young businessmen began to seek their fortunes in the village. John P. Hedges and John McCorkle contracted to furnish meat and bread to the Indians. Samuel Hanna arrived in 1819, formed a partnership with his brother-in-law, James Barnett, and opened a trading post.

REVEREND ISAAC MCCOY'S MISSION IN FORT WAYNE

The Protestant churches on the east coast tried to maintain contacts with the rapidly advancing frontier settlements, but the shortage of ministers and missionaries made the task incredibly difficult. In May, 1820, the Baptists sent out their first missionary to Fort Wayne at the joint request of Colonel John Johnston, the Indian agent, and Dr. William Turner, former army surgeon's mate at the fort.

The Baptist Missionary Society in Baltimore assigned Reverend Isaac McCoy to bring the gospel to the Indians in the Fort Wayne area. With his wife and seven children, Mr. McCoy began the hazardous journey from Terre Haute. Mr. Rykins, a teacher, accompanied them with the intention of opening a school in the settlement.

They rode horseback, and at one point in the wilderness, a party of drunken Indians attacked the missionary while he was separated from the rest of his party. His life was saved by a half-breed, Louis Godfrey. Chief Richardville then met and conveyed the party to Fort Wayne in safety. The missionary drove a herd of fifteen head of cattle and forty-three hogs the entire distance from Terre Haute. Family goods were brought by flatboats on the Wabash River and portaged across to the St. Mary's. The missionaries were kindly received by the people of the village, who furnished free quarters in the fort buildings and plowed two acres of ground for their garden.

Mr. McCoy preached to the villagers in his house every Sabbath. On May 29, 1820, he opened a school with ten English,

six French, one Negro, and eight Indian pupils. Matthew Montgomery, Mr. and Mrs. Potts, and Hugh B. McKean shared his teaching duties from time to time. One school visitor reported, "It is pleasant to see the order in which the school is kept and the delight that the scholars seem to take in their studies."

The perils of frontier life are well illustrated by the experience of McCoy's nine-year-old daughter. An Indian seized the child near the fort and would have murdered her but for the timely interference of a friendly young Indian and a member of the missionary school. The child was struggling desperately when her rescuers reached her.

The nearly fatal incident occurred just after Reverend Isaac McCoy had returned from a trip to Baltimore to secure financial aid for the mission and school. His efforts were successful, and he established a church of eleven members. His converts were all baptized in the Maumee River. His superiors assigned McCoy to a new field in southwestern Michigan in 1822; the little organization in Fort Wayne disbanded a short time later.

THE ORIGINAL PLAT OF FORT WAYNE

On May 8, 1822, Congress passed an act, signed by President Monroe, authorizing the sale of government unappropriated and unreserved lands about the fort.

John T. Barr, a merchant of Baltimore, and John McCorkle, a citizen of Piqua, Ohio, combined their resources and purchased a tract (since known as the Original Plat) for one dollar and a quarter per acre. They took immediate steps to plat the property and to offer for sale one hundred ten lots for business and residence sites. Four north and south streets--Calhoun, Court, Clinton, and Barr--and five east and west streets--Water, (now called Superior), Columbia, Main, Berry, and Wayne--were laid out. Alexander Ewing secured eighty acres of land immediately west of the Barr and McCorkle tract for one dollar and a quarter per acre, which became the Ewing Addition.



. . . the child was struggling desperately

EARLY MINISTERS IN FORT WAYNE

In December, 1822, a few weeks after the departure of the McCoys, Reverend John Ross arrived in Fort Wayne. The new minister was a native of Ireland and had served as pastor of a Presbyterian church near Franklin, Ohio. The Presbyterian General Assembly had sent out Mr. Ross on a three-month mission as an itinerant evangelist.

Reverend John Ross traveled in a light two-horse wagon with Matthew Griggs, who was a trader. The travelers reached their destination after considerable difficulty. Their first night's encampment was surrounded by howling wolves; later intense cold froze their wagon wheels fast in the mud in the midst of a swirling snowstorm. Unable to kindle a fire, they left the wagon guarded by a faithful dog and led the horses. Stumbling half-frozen into town late at night, they awakened Samuel Hanna, who welcomed them warmly and provided food and shelter.

"Father" Ross (first so-called by the Roman Catholics and later by the Protestants as a mark of respect) preached and conducted morning and afternoon services in the fort, because there was no other adequate place. Although "Father" Ross visited Fort Wayne five times in the next four years, he apparently never liked it much better than on that first perilous night. "There was no place that appeared to me as unpromising as Fort Wayne," he wrote. "There was no Sabbath kept but on the part of a few."

Although Mr. Ross found Fort Wayne inhabitants lax, many citizens felt a definite need for the religious and social services of the church. In 1824, the Reverend James Holman, a Methodist minister, came with his family and built a farm home near the St. Mary's River, north of the present-day New York, Chicago, and St. Louis (Nickel Plate) Railroad. The people gathered in his home for services. Some years later (1830), the Reverend Alexander Wiley established the first Methodist mission in Fort Wayne.

In 1825 James Hanna, father of Samuel Hanna, came from Dayton to visit his son. An elder in the Presbyterian Church of that city, he organized a Sunday School in the village. Classes met in the son's storeroom and were the nucleus of the church established later.

Johnny Appleseed (John Chapman, 1775-1847) traveled on

foot and by canoe, through northern Ohio to Fort Wayne, planting appleseeds procured from the cider mills of western Pennsylvania. Wherever he went, he read aloud from the Bible or the works of Emanuel Swedenborg to whomever would listen and attempted to further the cause of the Church of the New Jerusalem.

Some citizens felt the need of a resident minister and urged Allen Hamilton to appeal to the Home Missionary Society of the Presbyterian Church in Baltimore. The Society's minutes record the following memorandum:

Allen Hamilton, Postmaster at Fort Wayne, December 10, 1828, wrote saying that there had been no resident minister there since the town was laid out. He urged their claims by saying that the Canal was laid off through the place; that there are in the town and immediate vicinity five hundred inhabitants; and that there was not preaching within eighty miles.²

In response to this request, the Society sent the Reverend Charles E. Furman to Fort Wayne in November, 1829. His observations and opinions were quite different from those of his predecessor. Mr. Furman wrote of Fort Wayne,

The people are hospitable and have more intelligence and liberality of feeling than any similar town I have found in the country. I never knew, for the same number of inhabitants in any place, so many attendants upon the preaching of the gospel . . . and I think a church might now be formed of at least a dozen members.³

FOUNDING AND EARLY YEARS OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CONGREGATION

Although Mr. Furman, after a sojourn of six or eight months, left without forming the church of which he spoke, his recommendation to the church officials brought the first resident minister to Fort Wayne. The Reverend James Chute came from Columbus, Ohio, in June, 1831. On July 1 of the same year, the

first permanent church in Fort Wayne was formally organized.

On the first of July, the minute book of the First Presbyterian Church records the event.

Pursuant to notice previously given by James Chute, a regularly ordained minister of the Presbytery of Columbus, Ohio, a number of persons, members of the Presbyterian Church from different sections of the country, in regular standing, met for the purpose of being regularly organized into a Presbyterian Church.

The meeting was opened by singing, reading the Scriptures, and prayer by the Reverend James Chute. The following persons presented their certificates from other churches and were received as members of the First Presbyterian Church of Fort Wayne.

Smallwood Noel	Ann Griggs
Nancy M. C. Noel	John McIntosh
Sally C. Vance	Ann Turner
Nancy Barnett	

After receiving the certificates of the above-mentioned persons, the minister formally recognized them as the First Presbyterian Church of Fort Wayne.

The members proceeded to the election of two ruling elders, whereupon it was found that Mr. Smallwood Noel and Mr. John McIntosh were unanimously elected.⁴

On July 2 the minutes list additional charter members.

After a sermon by the Reverend James Chute, Mr. Smallwood Noel and Mr. John McIntosh, who had been duly elected ruling elders the day previous, were set apart for that office by ordination. After the ordination, the Session was constituted with prayer by Mr. Chute, who was invited to act as Moderator of Session.

Rebecca Hackley was received on certificate.
Eliza Hood, Elizabeth Stinson, Jane Clinger,
and James Barnett were received on examination.

Adjourned. Closed with prayer.⁵

Mrs. Ann Turner and Mrs. Rebecca Hackley were daughters

of Captain William Wells and granddaughters of Little Turtle. They had been baptized in the Maumee River by Mr. McCoy and had been educated in a Catholic seminary in Bardstown, Kentucky. Ann had married Dr. William Turner, surgeon's mate in the United States Army at the fort. Religious services were often held in their home. Rebecca married Captain James Hackley of the United States Army.

The co-operation of many citizens made possible the establishment of the church. Forty-four persons signed the following list of pledges (\$257.75), dated July 12, 1831 and enabled Mr. Chute to remain in the community as minister of the church.

We, the undersigned citizens of Fort Wayne and its vicinity, being very desirous of procuring the services of a resident minister of the Gospel among us, do agree to pay the several sums annexed to our names in aid of the support of the Reverend James Chute, for one year at this place.

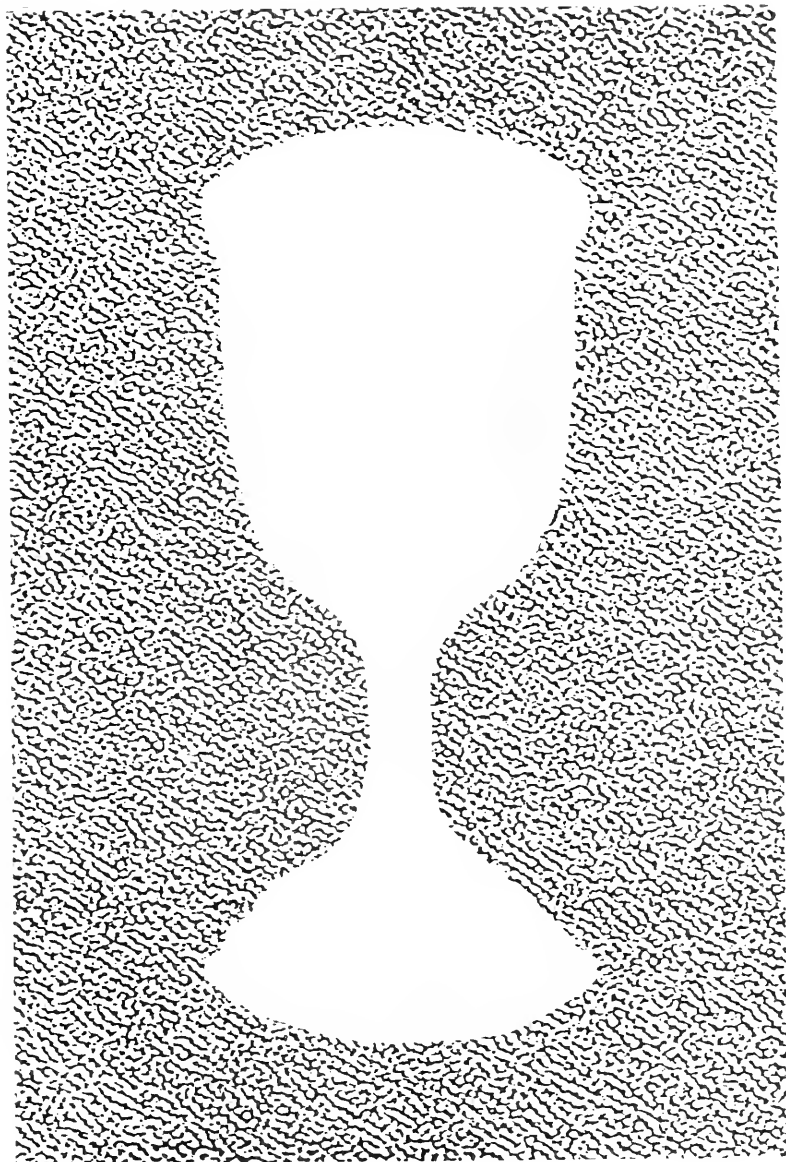
Samuel Hanna	\$15.00	John Jeffcoat	\$ 5.00
Allen Hamilton	7.50	Hill & Henderson	5.00
H. Hanna	10.00	Lewis H. Davis	10.00
Smallwood Noel	10.00	Isaac Patterson	1.00
David Archer	5.00	Francis Alexander	2.00
Wm. N. Hood	10.00	Hiram Weese	2.00
(at this rate as long as he		Simon Edsall	2.00
lives in Fort Wayne)		Charles S. Griggs	5.00
Z. B. Tenney	6.00	William Wilson	5.00
James Barnett	20.00	Lewis Armstrong	2.00
A. L. Davis	5.00	John Dubois	5.00
Wm. Rockhill	5.00	John McIntosh	5.00
Samuel Lewis	5.00	Wm. Sutenfield	2.00
Abner Girard	5.00	Samuel Brown	2.00
R. L. Britton	2.50	Thomas Daniels	2.00
Samuel Edsall	5.00	John McIntosh, Jr.	1.00
L. G. Thompson	5.00	James Daniels	5.00
Ann Turner	10.00	Philip Klinger	10.00
H. Rudisill	5.00	James D. Klinger	5.00
J. H. Griggs	7.75	John D. Klinger	5.00
Rebecca Hackley	5.00	William Caster	3.00
Matthew Griggs	10.00	(if he should remain a	
Mason M. Meriam	5.00	citizen)	
		Robert Hood	15.00 ^b

These persons of many Protestant denominations joined together for worship, even though most of them lacked membership in the Presbyterian Church. The number of churchgoers in the town hardly justified separate church buildings and services. Ministers of other faiths came to Fort Wayne in these early years and preached on alternate Sundays to the community congregation. Another bond uniting the faithful was the lack of even one reasonably comfortable meeting place in the town. It was not uncommon to see the minister with his Bible and hymnbook on a Sunday morning, leave one place of worship in search of another, followed by his congregation. Smoke and fumes of stubborn chimneys frequently forced such moves.

At first, the Presbyterians held services near the junction of Columbia and Harrison streets in a rude board shelter. A little brick schoolhouse (then called the County Seminary) on the site of the present-day Allen County Jail served as the second place of worship. Next the congregation met for a short period in the Masonic Hall on the north side of Columbia Street between Calhoun and Harrison streets. In 1833 this room was occupied by the son of Smallwood Noel, S. V. B. Noel, who, with Thomas Tigar established Fort Wayne's first newspaper, THE SENTINEL. Later the congregation moved next door to a carpentry shop, where the workbench became the pulpit on Sunday. Still later a small room on Columbia Street, a room in the Franklin House, and a brick tavern directly across from the Masonic Hall were used briefly for divine services. During the summer of 1833 and again in 1835-36, the old brick Court House sheltered the congregation. Following the death of Mr. Chute, the Reverend Daniel Jones ministered to the congregation until 1837.

THE FIRST CHURCH EDIFICE

After six years in uncomfortable and inadequate temporary quarters, the little congregation built and moved into its own home in 1837. The edifice was the first church built in Fort Wayne. The new church was located at what is now 334 East Berry Street. Reverend Alexander T. Rankin served as first pastor from 1837



Chalice from the first church building

to 1843.

The frame building, forty by forty feet, was a simple one-room structure. A wide flight of stairs led to two doorways in the façade of the church. Long windows in each side wall lighted the sanctuary. A modest steeple surmounted the roof directly above the façade and housed the clear-toned bell. The church was sparsely furnished with crude wooden benches, oil lamps, and window blinds. Wood-burning stoves warmed the congregation in cold weather.

The Fort Wayne-Allen County Historical Museum has on display the beautiful silver chalice, a brick, and a candlestick from this first church.

THE PRESBYTERIAN SCHOOL

No "free" schools existed in Fort Wayne until the 1850's. In the 1820's and '30's private classes were conducted in the County Seminary, located near the present Allen County Jail. Private and parochial schools provided almost the sole means of formal education for the town youth. The first floor of the new church stood several feet above ground level and an elementary school was housed in the basement.

The Reverend Jesse Hoover, a Lutheran minister from Woodstock, Canada, arrived in town in 1837 and became the first teacher in the new Presbyterian school. He also organized the first Lutheran Church in Fort Wayne and served as its first pastor. Adam Wefel and Henry Trier served as elders, and Henry Rudisill and Conrad Nill as deacons. Two years later the congregation began construction of a church on the site of the present St. Paul's Lutheran Church.

Miss Mann (later Mrs. Hugh McCulloch) and Miss Hubbell (later Mrs. Royal Taylor) also taught with Reverend Jesse Hoover. These pretty young women teachers were an innovation in Fort Wayne. Years later, A. C. Compere wrote of these pioneer women instructors:

They were competent teachers and did away with the raw-

hide and the hickory goads that male teachers had in their schools. These ladies were successful and well liked by their pupils; I was one.⁷

Alexander McJunkin taught in the Presbyterian school in 1838. Dr. John S. Irwin, later Superintendent of Public Schools, characterized him as follows:

He was a fine scholar, a strong, judicious instructor, and a stern, rigid disciplinarian; he most forcibly impressed his ideas and teachings upon the minds of his scholars, and, not infrequently with equal force, upon their bodies.⁸

Many resented Mr. McJunkin's methods. But one of his pupils, George Brackenridge, wrote at the turn of the century:

Mr. McJunkin was capable of teaching any branch of a college curriculum. A noble man, he was respected and held in fond remembrance by the many who went out from his school fitted to engage in any profession or business.⁹

CHURCH DISCIPLINE

The early Presbyterian Church imposed definite religious and social obligations upon its members. Failure to conform not infrequently brought censure and discipline upon the nonconformist.

A case in point involved one of the first two elders of the First Presbyterian Church. In 1838 the Session, which then consisted of six elders, considered the charge of intemperance against John McIntosh. His confession of guilt to the Session and his promise to reform saved him from further punishment at that time. Unfortunately, Mr. McIntosh continued in his erring ways; in 1841 the Session felt duty bound to take action. At that trial he was found guilty of the unchristian conduct of visiting tippling houses and being inebriated on a particular Saturday evening. The Session therefore resolved that he be suspended from communion with the Church until he should repent.

The National Assembly of the Presbyterian Church directed each minister to preach at least once a year on temperance and Sabbath observance. Since many families lived isolated at considerable distance from any church, colportage (distribution and selling religious books or tracts) was important in backwoods settlements. Some churches maintained Sunday-school libraries. Deeply religious people questioned the character of currently popular books and expressed alarm that much reading was done merely for entertainment and not for moral improvement.

A COMMUNITY CHURCH

For several years after the organization of the Church, Presbyterians, Methodists, and Baptists worshiped together; their respective ministers preached on successive Sundays. The limited number of churchgoers could easily worship in one building, which was supported by the membership of the three faiths.

An incident occurred during these early years that attracted no little attention in the press and throughout the town.

Since the Court House had become unsafe due to faulty construction, the authorities secured the privilege of holding court in the Presbyterian Church until suitable buildings could be built on the square. One day, when court was in session and a large crowd was present, a rumor gained currency that the steeple of the church was not securely supported and would come crashing down on all below. At this session there came a crash and a roar, and the people rushed to the doors and windows to escape the ruins. One man clasped the Bible in his arms and crawled under a bench. Discovering that the steeple was still in place, the crowd came back to find that the long stove pipe, which stretched from front to back, had fallen."

The Church continued to grow and expand its program. The first step toward organized music was taken in 1839; the elders appointed O. W. Jeffords choirmaster and named B. H. Tower and N. Farrand his assistants. The Session minutes read:



... the people rushed to escape

They are earnestly requested to accept the appointment and hold meetings for improvement in singing at such times and places as will be convenient for the people to attend.¹¹

A newspaper item in the spring of 1841 reads:

Fair on Wednesday evening by ladies of the city at the Washington Hall; the proceeds will help furnish the Presbyterian Church.¹²

In 1842 another notice called all citizens of Allen County to a meeting at the Church to elect delegates to a meeting regarding the dedication of the Canal. This notice was signed by William Rockhill, Joseph B. McMakin, and Samuel Hanna.

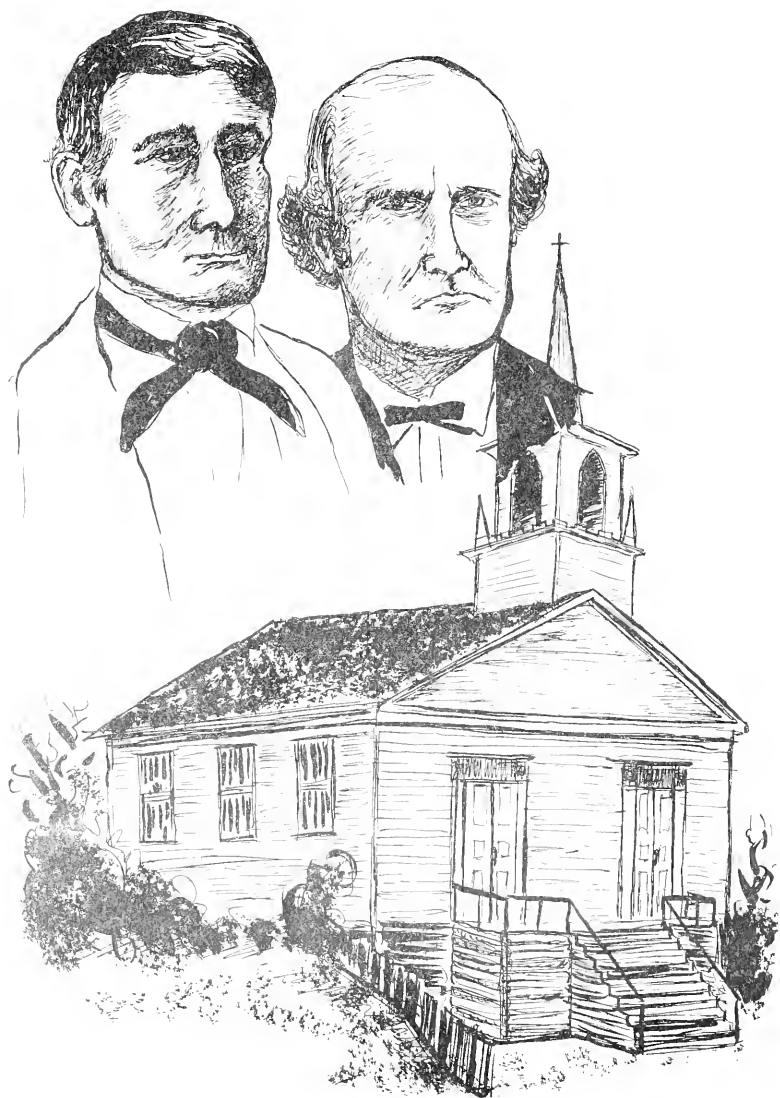
This little frame Church saw the organization of the Synod of Northern Indiana within its walls in October, 1843. The Reverend John Wright of Logansport, who had helped organize the Synod of Ohio twenty-nine years before at Chillicothe, preached the opening sermon of the Synod. The Presbytery of Fort Wayne was established in January, 1845.

INCORPORATION AND GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH

In 1843 the First Presbyterian Church was incorporated under a special act of the Indiana General Assembly. The act was signed by Governor Samuel Bigger. The Act of Incorporation provided that a board of trustees be elected to assume the legal responsibilities of the Church. The first board members named were Samuel Hanna, Allen Hamilton, John E. Hill, John Cochrane, and Dr. Charles E. Sturgis. They were charged with the responsibility of guiding financial affairs and administering church property. The first business of the new trustees was to pay Reverend Alexander T. Rankin for past and present services. Although his salary was only four hundred dollars annually, Mr. Rankin was obliged to accept a portion in credit at Hamilton and Williams.



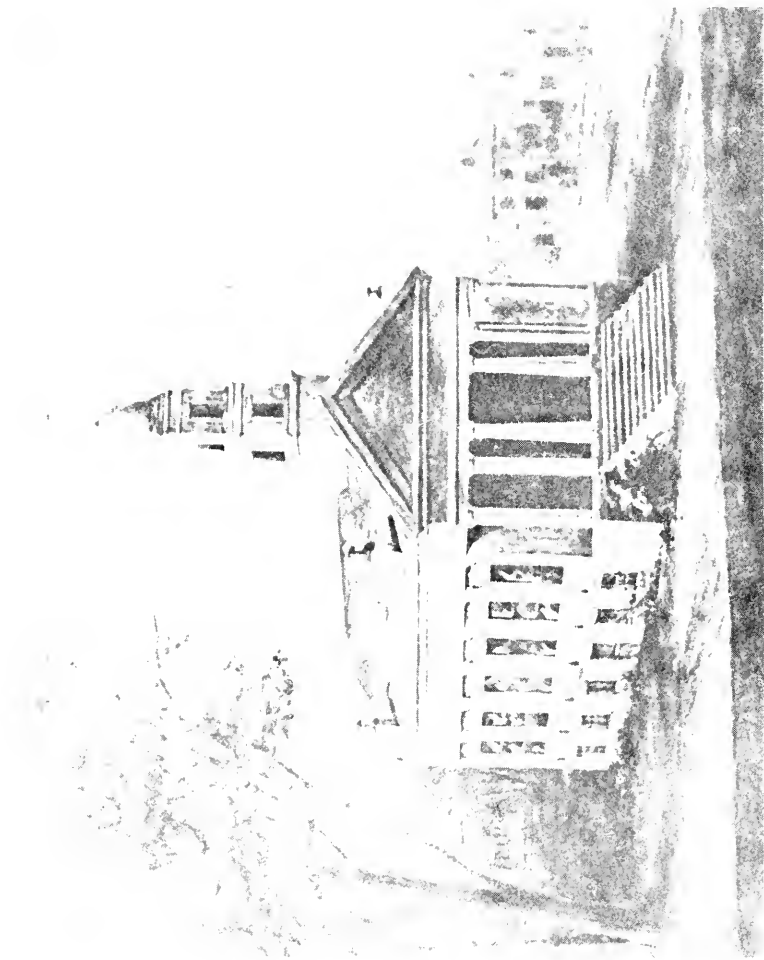
First church building, 1837-47



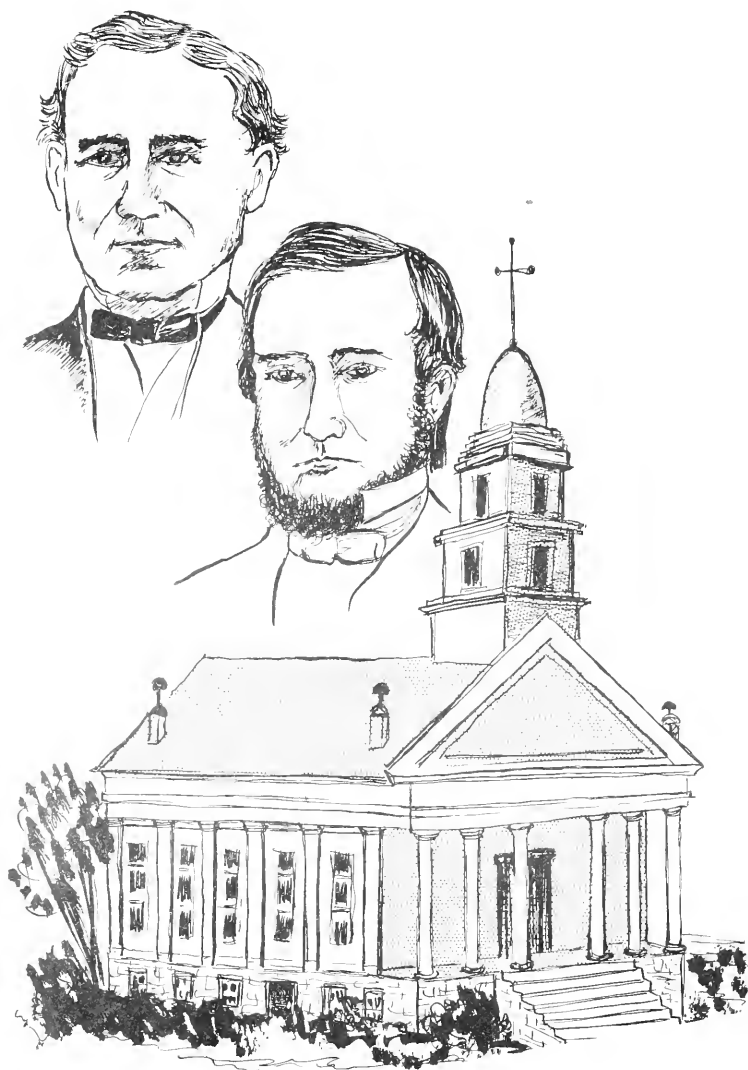
First church building

Reverend Daniel Jones

Reverend Alexander T. Rankin



Second church building, 1847-63



Second church building

Reverend H. S. Dickson

Dr. Jonathan Edwards



Third church building, 1864-82



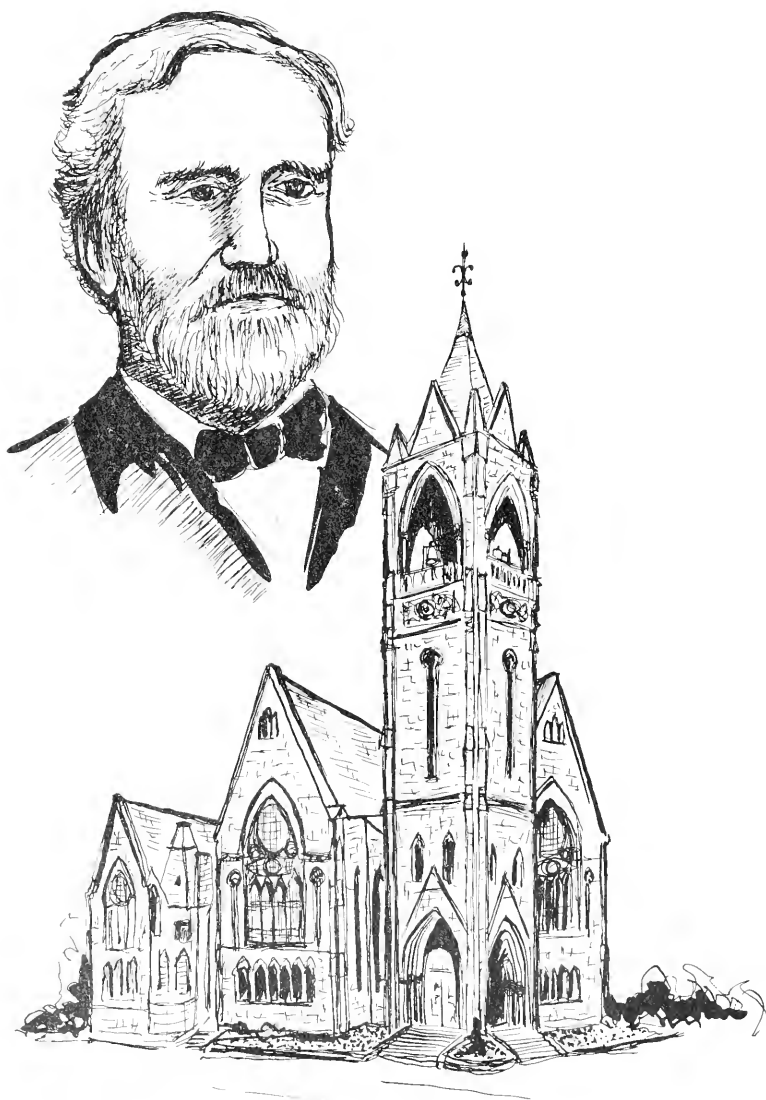
Third church building

Reverend John M. Lowrie

Reverend Thomas H. Skinner



Fourth church building, 1886-1955



Fourth church building
Dr. David W. Moffatt

THE CONTROVERSY WITHIN THE CHURCH

The National Assembly of the Presbyterian Church was at this time divided between "Old School" and "New School" factions, which may be loosely characterized as conservatives and liberals. The Old School party, alarmed at the infiltration of liberal New England theology, opposed the Plan of Union with the Congregationalists. The Plan of Union (adopted in 1801) permitted Presbyterian and Congregational ministers to serve in churches of either denomination; it also provided for co-operation in foreign and home missionary fields. Many New Englanders belonged to the New School party, which approved the Plan of Union. Many "New Schoolers" advocated a firm abolition position in the slavery controversy.

When the pulpit of the First Presbyterian Church in Fort Wayne became vacant in 1844, the New School group thought they saw an opportunity to add the prominent congregation to their cause. Hence, Henry Ward Beecher, one of their most popular and promising clergymen, was persuaded to come to Fort Wayne to win the allegiance of the First Church members. The church officers, anticipating such strategy, persuaded Dr. William C. Anderson, an English professor at Hanover College, to come immediately to fill the pulpit through the emergency.

He arrived in Fort Wayne April 14, 1844, took charge of the church, preached on the same day, and thus became pastor. The following Saturday Mr. Beecher arrived in a bespattered condition from Indianapolis. He had ridden horseback through the rich Indiana mud. Hitching his horse, he hurried into the Jesse L. Williams home. Mr. Williams was away, and Beecher announced to Mrs. Williams, "I have just come to divide your church!"¹³

A gifted, silver-tongued orator, Henry Ward Beecher had been reared in an intellectual atmosphere amid frequent theological discussions. Revivals and doctrinal debate afforded him keen delight. (Four of Henry's five brothers became ministers. Two sisters, Catherine, and Harriet Beecher Stowe, were famous members of the clan.)

Anderson and Beecher fought a determined battle for control of the church. Although Beecher preached daily for two weeks

in the old Court House and visited the homes of church members, he did not persuade a majority. He did win enough proselytes to warrant the later formation of a Second Presbyterian Church (later renamed the Westminster Presbyterian Church). The new group consisted of twelve members; six of these were dismissed from the First Presbyterian Church at their request.

On November 8, 1844, the Second Church group heard a sermon by Dr. Lyman Beecher (father of Henry Ward Beecher and president of Lane Seminary at Cincinnati) and proceeded to organize with three ministers and one elder present. Charles Beecher, a brother of Henry Ward Beecher, was ordained as the minister. This was quite a Beecher occasion. Their New England background, their theological liberalism, and their advanced social views (especially regarding slavery) made them rather unpopular with the Old School branch of the church.

SECOND CHURCH EDIFICE

By 1844 the membership of the First Presbyterian Church had increased from the twelve charter members to one hundred thirty-nine. The original frame building was no longer adequate, and the congregation began plans for a new building.

Samuel Bigger, former governor of Indiana, agreed to serve as chairman of the committee to select the new site. At the close of his term of office in 1844, ex-Governor Bigger moved to Fort Wayne, practiced law, and affiliated with the First Church. (He was a faithful and active member until his untimely death in 1846).

His committee first purchased a lot at the southwest corner of Clinton and Berry streets for six hundred dollars. In 1845 the committee traded this lot for two lots on the southeast corner of the same intersection and paid an additional sum of five hundred fifty dollars.

Samuel Hanna, then president of the Church's Board of Trustees, headed the Building Committee. The trustees instructed this committee to plan a building at least fifty feet wide and eighty feet long; they requested that the basement house the Sabbath school and lecture rooms. Cost was not to exceed seven thousand dollars.

This estimate proved unduly optimistic, for the site and the completed building actually cost thirteen thousand five hundred dollars.

John Cochrane, building superintendent, followed the wishes of the committee and designed a beautiful Colonial structure with a seating capacity for three hundred twenty worshippers.

The pastor, Reverend H. S. Dickson, laid the cornerstone with prescribed ceremonies in October, 1845. The basement was first used for public worship in 1847. The church proper was completed and solemnly dedicated for divine worship in November, 1852. Reverend Thomas E. Thomas, D.D., President of Hanover College, delivered the sermon at the dedicatory ceremonies.

The old church building was sold in 1846 to the newly organized Evangelical English Lutheran Church for eight hundred dollars. The purchase price included the lot, building, bell, pews, and pulpit, but not the stoves, lamps, and blinds, which the Presbyterians reserved for their new church. The sales contract provided that half the purchase price might be paid in materials for the new building; the other half in two two-hundred-dollar notes, payable a year apart.

As was the custom of the day among Protestant groups, the Board of Trustees raised the building fund through the sale of church pews to the highest bidders. One-fifth of all pews were reserved for poorer members of the congregation and visitors. Members valued some pews higher than others because of their location. Samuel Hanna, for example, paid three hundred dollars a year for a choice pew. The church authorities deeded another choice pew near Mr. Hanna's to John Cochrane as a gift. Members frequently paid pew costs and assessments in land and materials rather than cash. William G. and George W. Ewing, members of the congregation but not members of the Church, deeded eighty acres of land to the Church (valued at two to two and one-half dollars per acre) in payment for a pew. Annual assessments for each member were determined by the value of his pew. The practice continued for many years.

The trustees hired a sexton for the Church in December, 1845. The minutes for the December 12 meeting follow:

Resolved, that Mr. Mershon shall be employed as sexton for the present at one dollar per week. The sexton shall ring the

bell at all meetings--twice when there is preaching and once for all other meetings or whenever an alarm of fire is given. It shall be his duty to scrub the church once a quarter and always on the Friday preceding the communion Sabbath; he shall sweep and dust the church every Saturday. It shall be his duty to fill, clean, and light the lamps when necessary, attend the fires, see that the house is comfortable, and furnish wood in the basement ready for burning. He is to be allowed extra for scrubbing the house."¹⁴

PRESBYTERIAN SCHOOL AND ACADEMY

Since the public school system did not come into existence until a number of years later, the First Presbyterian Church, like other churches, conducted academic classes in its basement rooms. Martha Brandriff Hanna, who came to Fort Wayne as a child in 1852, recalled later,

We all, big and little, attended school in the basement of the First Presbyterian Church, where the post office now stands (at the southeast corner of Berry and Clinton streets). At play-time, we some times nearly scared the wits out of the new pupils by our prank of playing ghost in the furnace room. We had play-houses in the deep-seated windows, which the pastor and elders benevolently smiled on during the weekly prayer meeting. Occasionally a doll would be left in a pew, but it caused no reprimand.¹⁵

The Presbyterian Academy opened in 1845 in a small building on the north side of Wayne Street between Calhoun and Clinton streets. It was a one-story frame building, with a hall, cloak-room, and two classrooms. The last-mentioned rooms were separated by folding doors, which, on occasion, were thrown open to provide a large assembly room. The classrooms had good desks and were well lighted and ventilated. The illness of the Academy's founder, Mrs. Lydia Sykes, forced its closing after a few years, but Reverend Jonathan Edwards reopened it in August, 1853.

Although sponsored by the Church, the Academy was governed by a board of trustees distinct from that of the Church. The

first men teachers were Henry McCormick and Jacob W. Lanier, both college graduates. George A. Irvin, a young Kentuckian and a graduate of Hanover College (later first superintendent of the city public schools), who had administered a ladies' seminary at Paris, Kentucky, assumed charge in the late 1850's. He seems to be remembered as a liberal user of the switch and chewing tobacco. In 1863 Mr. Irvin resigned his post to become a chaplain in the Union army. Some years later the old Presbyterian Academy building was moved to Harmar and East Jefferson streets and reopened as the Harmar School and thus became part of the public school system. The first Fort Wayne High School later occupied the old site.

THE LADIES AND CHURCH FAIRS

The ladies of the First Presbyterian Church evidently enjoyed holding fairs. On February 22, 1847, one such fair netted five hundred fifty dollars for the church.

Unfortunately, the social affair stirred up a bitter controversy in the local newspapers. George Washington Wood, who had served as Fort Wayne's first mayor in 1840-41, was founder and editor of the FORT WAYNE TIMES AND PEOPLE'S PRESS. Shortly after the fair on February 27, Mr. Wood editorialized rather strongly against the practice. He commended the church women for their taste, skill, and industry and then charged them with "forcing money out of the pockets of the people, without the consent of their sober and enlightened judgment" and with "selling goods at a much higher rate than would be considered honest for merchants to charge in the regular course or trade." Finally, Mr. Wood accused the ladies of "pious swindling"!

The editorial was a complete reversal of his stand toward church fairs just two months previously. At that time he had warmly commended the First Presbyterian ladies, whose Christmas Eve Fair had earned four hundred fifty dollars. He had rejoiced in their success and had thought it worth trying again.

Reverend H. S. Dickson, pastor of the Church, read the editorial with astonishment and hastened to the defense of the fair

sex. He addressed his gallant defense of the ladies' fair in a letter to the editor of a rival newspaper, the FORT WAYNE WEEKLY SENTINEL. That paper published Mr. Dickson's lengthy reply to the attack of Mr. Wood.

After noting Wood's charges against the ladies, the minister quoted the editor's fulsome praise of a church fair in his January 2 issue. The following paragraphs are excerpted from the letter:

It appears then that this guardian of public morals was not awake on the second of January to the evils of fairs. His keen moral sensibilities did not detect anything wrong in them at that period. On the contrary, he was happy to hear that the ladies had succeeded in raising four hundred fifty dollars. He rejoiced at their success and thought it worth trying again!

We presume, however, that this editor's morality is of a very accommodating character and that he can readily become all things at all times. But we confess we did not expect to see, at this enlightened day, and among these intelligent people, such slanderous and abusive charges published against those who are loved and esteemed by all.

The abusive article was altogether uncalled for. The fair was conducted on strictly honest and honorable principles. A committee of ladies marked the articles at their supposed value, and two intelligent and experienced merchants were invited to examine the prices. The latter pronounced them too low--so low that if the materials had been purchased from the stores, there would remain no adequate compensation for the labor. True, he may differ with them as to the real value of such things, and they, no doubt, would differ with him as to the intrinsic value of his paper.

We doubt the morality of making these unjust charges against the innocent, who, from their position in society, cannot defend themselves; these allegations are not only without proof but are contrary to all the evidence in the case.

This editor is also very anxious about the welfare of the churches. He is afraid that they will lose their Christian character! Truly, if they had no more character to lose than a certain nameless one, his anxiety would at once be quieted and his fears removed."

The acrimonious exchanges between these men in the local papers entertained the community for weeks. Probably personal differences accounted for the bitterness of the attacks. In July, 1847, the pastor accepted a call from a church in another city and tendered his resignation to the Board of Trustees of the First Presbyterian Church.

The ladies of the congregation began to seek more influence in church affairs. During the November, 1847, annual meeting, Allen Hamilton made the motion that the ladies be allowed to vote on congregational matters. Samuel Hanna, Smallwood Noel, John Cochrane, and Dr. Henry P. Ayers supported Mr. Hamilton; James H. Robinson opposed him. After lively discussion the resolution was adopted. The First Presbyterian women had the suffrage in their Church seventy-two years before they were granted the same right by the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution, which was ratified in 1919.

CHURCH GROWTH AND PROGRESS, 1850-1880

In 1856 natural gas became available in Fort Wayne, and the congregation installed gas-lighting to replace the oil lamps. During the following year the Church added a belfry costing twelve hundred dollars. Jesse L. Williams secured timber from the old fort for that purpose. An earlier bell which had been purchased in 1848 proved faulty, and the Church purchased another of approximate size from a bellmaker in Troy, New York. A controversy over the cost of the new bell dragged on until 1862, when a legal settlement was made.

Prominent citizens frequently made public addresses at the church under Presbyterian auspices. Speakers included Samuel Hanna, Hugh McCulloch, and Jesse L. Williams. In 1860 the last mentioned leader delivered an address on the history of early churches of Fort Wayne.

Steady increase in church membership necessitated a larger building. On July 27, 1863, the congregation held a special meeting and adopted resolutions to enlarge and modernize the church by adding a new wing. Samuel Hanna again served as chair-

man of the Building Committee, which accepted a bid of sixty-three hundred dollars for the work from John Cochrane.

When completed, the building was called the third edifice, although, strictly speaking, it was an enlargement and complete renovation of the second.

The sale of pews to the highest bidders raised the building fund. The number of pews increased from three hundred twenty to six hundred forty. After considerable discussion, it was decided that current pew assignments be returned to the Church in exchange for stock which would then be used to acquire new pews. Some friction and confusion developed. The trustees' records note:

Amicable arrangements have been made by the parties interested. The trustees now agree that Pew No. 90 shall belong to Willis Hanna instead of the one sold him at the public sale. No. 93 and No. 94 shall belong to Pliny Hoagland. No. 96 shall belong to A. P. Edgerton, since he paid a premium of one hundred sixty dollars. No. 97 and No. 101 now belong to John E. Hill; he is released from the premium bid on No. 96. No. 98 and No. 99 shall belong to Samuel Hanna. No. 100 is assigned to the pastor's family. Other sales and assignments of these pews are hereby made void."

The ladies formally organized the Missionary Society in 1871. Through this agency, they raised money and supplies for the missions and for the Church. In many instances, missionaries and their families who endured great hardships were relieved through the unobtrusive aid of these ladies.

In 1871 the First Presbyterian Church installed a new pipe organ at a cost of thirty-five hundred dollars, raised by private subscription among the members. A local newspaper comments on the new organ:

It has long been a matter of astonishment to the public that the First Presbyterian Church did not pay more attention to its musical affairs. The sentiment of the congregation has long demanded the use of an organ in the musical services of the Church, and this sentiment took practical shape last spring in the movement which led to the purchase of the magnificent organ, which

was yesterday used for the first time in sounding praise to Almighty God.

The choir was under the direction of Professor Hodgdon, who sings bass. Miss Jennie Snively sang soprano, Miss Clara Goodwin, contralto, and Amelias J. Lang, baritone. The organist, Professor Charles Meyers, did not attempt to bring out the full power of the instrument. Its rich tones, combined with the powerful union of voices, produced an inspiring effect. All expressed themselves as delighted with the tone and compass of the instrument, although some were disappointed at not hearing its full capacity.¹⁸

Organized in 1878, the Haydn Quartette was invited to assume the duties of the choir in January, 1889. So successful was its efforts that the members served in the choir for almost a quarter of a century.

This quartette consisted of Edward F. Yarnelle, tenor, Charles L. Olds, second tenor, Charles H. Worden, baritone, and Amelias J. Lang, bass. Messrs. Olds and Worden were blenders, although they carried solo parts when necessary. Most of the solo work was done by Mr. Yarnelle with his clear, golden tenor and by Mr. Lang with his deep, booming bass.

Mr. Yarnelle made an outstanding contribution to the Church with his music. He had a voice that, without question, could have provided a musical career had he desired it. He sang with great feeling, expression, and beautiful tone. For probably twenty or thirty years, he led the music in the Sunday school.

Mr. Lang was not over five feet tall. There was always a box for him to stand on in the choir loft to bring him up within reach of the others. He had a voice that sounded as if it ought to have a body three times his size. A powerful, very low, true bass, he never had to reach for the lower notes. The voices of these men blended extremely well, and the old-timers all remember them with much pleasure. These were all men of affairs, but they found time to sing on hundreds of occasions outside the Church. Concerts, weddings, funerals, and many other occasions brought them out.¹⁹

THE FIRE OF 1882

On December 16, 1882, fire completely destroyed the First Presbyterian Church. Let excerpts from the rather flamboyant account in the SENTINEL tell the tale:

On Saturday evening, the First Presbyterian Church, one of Fort Wayne's landmarks, burned. The fire was first discovered about half-past six by the janitor, William Shoemaker, who came to look after the fires in the three large furnaces. He had built the fires about half-past four to heat the Church for Sunday services. Shoemaker saw a bright light shining through the Clinton Street windows. Entering, he made the appalling discovery that a conflagration was raging within the sacred walls. He hastened to the enginehouse and notified Chief Henry Hilbrecht.

When the Chief arrived, wreaths of black smoke were curling through the tall belfry, the rear of the church was ablaze, and red flames shot from the roof and licked the wooden cornices in their deadly devastation. The Chief found several people excitedly endeavoring to take out of the burning auditorium all that was portable. Fortunately, the church records were saved. With great dispatch he ordered the hose laid and connected with the hydrants. The first relay was carried through the center aisle and directed upon the spot whence the flames had first appeared. On the left side of the auditorium in the lath and plaster partition, Hilbrecht discovered a hole eight feet high and four feet wide. The flames had communicated from a defective flue and instantly shot up through the latticed work to the ceiling and then to the roof. The flames swept on rapidly to the belfry.

Although Chief Hilbrecht believed that the fire was beyond control, he conscientiously ordered his men to fight the raging inferno, and they rendered efficient service under the difficulties. Five streams from the hydrants were directed against the flames, and the "Anthony Wayne" and "Charley Zollinger" steamers were ordered out. Although the hydrants worked efficiently, the engineer, John H. Turner, could not secure the force required for several minutes. The first pressure was sixty to seventy pounds. He soon increased the pressure to eighty-five pounds. Some very lofty streams were finally obtained, but even if they had been se-



Hilbrecht ordered his men to fight the raging inferno

cured initially, the building could not have been saved.

The flames enwrapped the sacred structure in a weird mantle of flame, shooting athwart the black sky and illuminating the streets roundabout, which were crowded with spectators. Even the famed pyrotechnic displays at the Crystal Palace in London could not approach this carnival of the fire fiend in Fort Wayne. The vast crowd breathlessly awaited the falling of the lofty belfry, which became a red skeleton of framework. The bell tower leaned in the direction of Berry Street and finally fell with a booming crash. The bell, which has for so many years called the faithful to prayer and praise, sank down in the flaming ruins of the auditorium, sounding the knell of the fated house of God. Then the melancholy interest in the conflagration seemed to subside, and men, women, and children departed for their various destinations, discussing the exciting scene they had just witnessed.

John M. Moritz of the Aveline House invited some forty firemen to the dining room, where coffee and other refreshments were served. Chief Hilbrecht, in behalf of the department, expresses thanks to the considerate gentleman through these columns.²⁰

PLANS FOR A NEW BUILDING

The churches of the city sent messages of sympathy to the First Presbyterian congregation and offered the use of their buildings for services. On Sunday, January 17, 1883, the congregation met in the Trinity English Lutheran Church at the invitation of Reverend Samuel Wagenhals. Until April, 1883, the members met in the Circuit Court Room of the Court House through the kindness of Judge Edward O'Rourke and the Allen County Commissioners. The First Presbyterians then held services in the Synagogue of the Achduth Vesholom Congregation and continued to do so until October 1, 1885; their Sunday school classes met in the Second Presbyterian Church.

The kindness of the Achduth Vesholom Congregation in permitting the use of their temple without compensation created a firm bond of brotherhood. Later the First Presbyterian congrega-

tion generously contributed one thousand dollars to help defray the debt on a new temple.

Shortly after the fire, Doctors William B. Knapp and George W. Bowen searched among the blackened ruins and found the cornerstone of the church at the northeast corner. The cavity within the stone contained a leaden box, which had been damaged in setting the stone. The lid and sides of the box were battered, and the contents were water-soaked. The condition of the contents made an immediate examination impossible. At Reverend David W. Moffatt's suggestion, the box was taken to Nuttman's Bank where the contents were removed and spread out to dry. These included a Bible, a prayer book, the proceedings of the Presbyterian General Assembly, the October 18, 1845 issue of the FORT WAYNE TIMES AND PEOPLE'S PRESS, a silver dollar minted in 1796 (retained by Dr. Bowen as a souvenir), and a half dollar issued in 1841 (kept by Dr. Knapp). Later he returned the coin to the church authorities and suggested that it be placed in the cornerstone of the new church.

Within a week after the fire, the Presbyterians met to consider the task of rebuilding. After some discussion as to the advisability of rebuilding on the old foundations and walls, they unanimously decided that this should not be done. The congregation named the following men to a building committee: Allen Hamilton, Oliver P. Morgan, William H. Hoffman, John M. Moritz, James McCracken, Oscar A. Simons, John Cochrane, Edward P. Williams, and John D. Olds. A few days later action was taken to offer the old site to the federal government for a post office. The government accepted the offer and paid twenty-five thousand dollars to the congregation for the lot which had cost the church eleven hundred fifty dollars in 1845.

In September, 1883, the congregation appointed Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Hayden to procure suitable sites for the location of a new building. They were superseded the following month by a five-man committee; Henry Sharp, Joseph D. Nuttman, R. Morgan French, William H. Hoffman, and Fred J. Hayden.

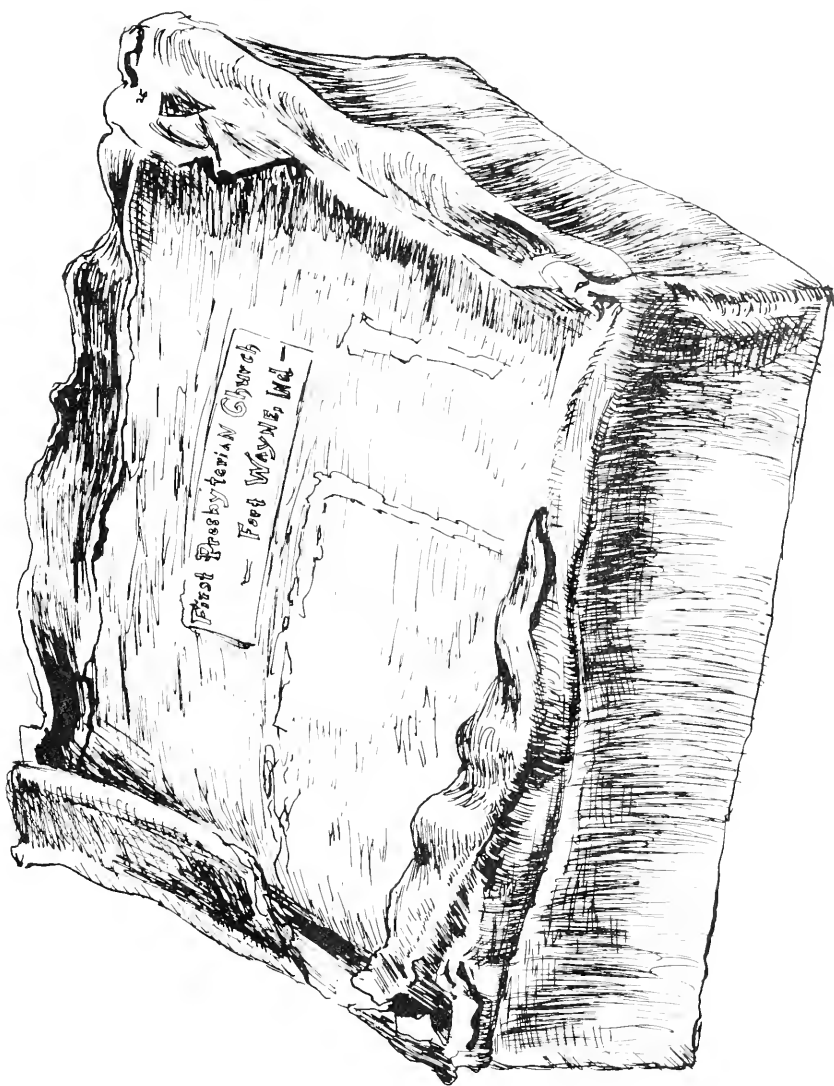
THE FOURTH CHURCH EDIFICE

A congregational meeting was held on November 12, 1883, to consider three sites for the new church. The following bids were considered: the Brackenridge homestead, a one-hundred-twenty-foot frontage (site of the present-day Public Library) for eighteen thousand dollars; Mrs. Meyer's property (site of the present-day Patterson-Fletcher Company), twenty thousand five hundred dollars; and the John Taylor property, one-hundred-twenty-foot frontage at the northeast corner of Clinton and Washington streets for twelve thousand dollars. In 1883 the congregation accepted the Taylor bid by a vote of one hundred twenty-eight against a total of thirty-five for the other two sites.

Proceeds from the sale of the old site, payments totaling fourteen thousand five hundred dollars from fire insurance policies, five hundred thirty-five dollars from William Moellering for removing the ruins constituted the nucleus of the new building fund. The major portion of the cost of the new edifice was born by pledges and subscriptions from members of the congregation and other generous citizens. The record of subscriptions and payments to the building fund includes pledges written in longhand by the donors. One reads, "I pledge one thousand dollars, one half to be paid in 1885 and one half in 1886 after forty thousand dollars good subscriptions have been made." David N. Foster wrote, "I will give six hundred yards of the highest grade wool extra super carpet, which shall be selected by a committee of ladies of the congregation . . . or five hundred dollars." (The carpet cost eighty cents a yard!) E. P. Williams subscribed an amount equal to one tenth of the total subscription. Jesse L. Williams gave two thousand dollars.

The Building Committee selected a plan prepared by Gregory Vigeant, a Chicago architect, and awarded the building contract to Christian Boseker.

In the spring of 1884, work began in earnest on the fourth edifice of the First Presbyterian Church. Contractors employed unskilled laborers to dig and load the earth into horse-drawn wagons. The earth was used as fill dirt in low-lying residential areas. During the succeeding months the tall outlines of a modified Gothic structure began to appear on the northeast corner of Clinton and



Leaden box from the first church edifice

Washington streets. The exterior of the building was of yellow sandstone quarried in Michigan, and the roof was of slate. The total width east and west was one hundred feet, and the total length north and south was one hundred thirty-four feet.

The cornerstone of the new church was laid with appropriate ceremonies. The stone was unusual in two respects--it was solid and lacked the usual cavity for records, and was placed at ground level in the center of the Washington Street wall. Nearly seventy years later, just before the wreckers began razing the building, Mr. and Mrs. Lee F. Bernhardt, long-time members of the congregation, found a leaden box in the basement containing old documents and records of the first church edifice. The box and contents were given to the church authorities.

Structural steel was unknown in 1884; the builders, somewhat ahead of their time, used laminated timbers for the framework. The frame was made of two-by-twelve-inch timbers laminated together with huge bolts; to the observer they appeared to be solid wooden beams.

The north end of the edifice, which was divided from the auditorium by a fire wall, had two floors. The lecture room and Sabbath school rooms were on the lower level; the church parlors, on the upper floor. Sunday-school quarters were completed, and classes met there in October, 1885. On the first Sabbath of the same month, the congregation began to meet in the lecture room of the new church.

The south portion of the building housed the sanctuary. The builders had to brace and rebrace in order to push the roof to the desired height. The four "A-tress" peaks over the sanctuary were held together by eight twelve-by-twelve laminated scissor beams, which radiated from a center circle and thus supported each other.

Large stained glass windows, each containing approximately two thousand pieces of glass, were set in the south and west walls. A row of six smaller stained glass windows was directly below each large opening. These apertures admitted the softened sunlight and enhanced the beautifully frescoed walls.

The bell tower stood on the southwest corner of the edifice. Arched entrances in the bell tower opened into an interior vestibule. Lancet arches rose above the doorways; slitlike windows

dimly lighted the bell tower staircase. The tower was constructed only to roof level.

On May 1, 1886, members of the congregation gathered for the first time in their beautiful new church for divine services. Passing through the vestibule and into the church proper, they noted with admiration the woodwork of California redwood. They walked down the aisles, which were covered, like the entire floor, by beautifully patterned Brussels carpet. Ushered into a semi-circle of cherry pews, which accommodated seven hundred fifty worshipers, they seated themselves on red velvet cushions and gazed about the new church with pardonable pride.

As services began, the strains of the beautiful new organ flooded the sanctuary. The rich tones of the cherry woodwork of the pulpit, pulpit furniture, and organ console, the opulence of the decoration and furnishings, and the array of lovely flowers delighted the eye.

The church proper was lighted by a huge gas chandelier of Bailey pattern, the first ever built in this region. It contained sixty-six burners and two sets of reflectors; one set reflected downward and the other at angles, lighting every part of the room. Hattersley & Sons erected the fixture at a cost of five hundred dollars. The cost of the completed church far exceeded the original estimates. In 1886 costs totaled \$81,855.

In March, 1893, the Michigan quarry which had supplied the building stone was about to be closed. Contractor John J. Geake was building the John Bass home of stone from the same quarry. The congregation of the First Presbyterian voted an additional seven thousand dollars and awarded him the contract to complete the bell tower with the matching stone. The steeple, two hundred twenty feet high, was then the highest in the city. The cost of the completed edifice, including interest on the debt, totaled \$101,658.66.

The following resumé of membership appeared in the local press just prior to the inauguration of the new edifice:

The total admissions to membership in this Church since its organization in 1831 has been five hundred forty-four on profession of faith and six hundred nineteen on certificate from other churches. The present membership is four hundred fifteen. In

May, 1844, six members who were dismissed at their own request organized with others as the Second Presbyterian Church. Again on December 2, 1867, thirty-four members were dismissed in like manner so that they might organize as the Third Presbyterian Church of Fort Wayne.²¹

Early-day members of the First Presbyterian Church included these prominent citizens: Samuel Bigger, onetime governor of Indiana; Colonel Robert S. Robertson, lieutenant governor of Indiana; James H. Smart, noted educator; Joseph D. Nuttman, founder of the First National Bank of Fort Wayne; Allen Hamilton, founder of the Hamilton National Bank; Judge Samuel Hanna; Judge Edward O'Rourke; William G. Ewing, first man admitted to the bar in Allen County; and George W. Ewing, one of the most widely known businessmen in the Middle West.

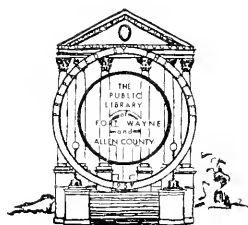
LIST OF PASTORS

The following clergymen served as pastors or supplied the pulpit of the First Presbyterian Church in the nineteenth century.

Reverend James Chute	Organized Church July 1, 1831
	Died December 28, 1835
Reverend Daniel Jones	Supplied in 1836
Reverend Jesse Hoover (Lutheran)	Supplied after Mr. Jones till October, 1837
Reverend Alexander T. Rankin	Supplied from October, 1837, to September, 1843
Reverend William C. Anderson, D.D.	Called in spring of 1844, declined, but preached six months
Reverend H. S. Dickson, D.D.	Installed November, 1845
	Resigned July, 1847
Reverend James Greer	Supplied July to November, 1847
Reverend Lowman Hawes	Supplied six months in 1848
Reverend J. G. Riheldaffer	Supplied from August, 1848 to 1851
Reverend Jonathan Edwards, D.D.	Installed November, 1851
	Resigned July, 1855
Reverend J. H. Burns	Supplied in 1856
Reverend John Marshal Lowrie, D.D.	Installed November, 1856
	Continued till death, September 26, 1867
Reverend Thomas H. Skinner, D.D.	Called March, 1868
	Installed September 16, 1869
	Resigned September 18, 1871
Reverend David W. Moffatt, D.D.	Called February 5, 1872
	Installed 1875
	Retired January 1, 1906
	Made Pastor Emeritus
	Died 1920

NOTES

1. B. J. Griswold, PICTORIAL HISTORY OF FORT WAYNE, INDIANA (Chicago: Robert O. Law Company, 1917), Vol. I, p. 242.
2. J. L. Williams, HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, FORT WAYNE, INDIANA (Fort Wayne: Daily News Printing House, 1881), p. 14.
3. Ibid., p. 15.
4. C. J. Worden, HISTORICAL SKETCHES CONCERNING THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, FORT WAYNE, INDIANA (Fort Wayne, First Presbyterian Church Foundation, 1945), p. 7.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid., p. 8.
7. Griswold, op. cit., p. 335.
8. Ibid., p. 341.
9. Mrs. Lura Case Woodworth and Others, REMINISCENCES OF OLD FORT WAYNE, 1906 (Fort Wayne: Public Library of Fort Wayne and Allen County, 1953), p. [25].
10. Ibid.
11. Worden, op. cit., p. 36.
12. FORT WAYNE SENTINEL, May 10, 1841.
13. FORT WAYNE GAZETTE, May 15, 1878.
14. Worden, op. cit., p. 16.
15. Woodworth, op. cit., p. [25].
16. FORT WAYNE SENTINEL, March 6, 1847.
17. Worden, op. cit., p. 41.
18. FORT WAYNE GAZETTE, September 18, 1871.
19. Worden, op. cit., p. 36.
20. FORT WAYNE SENTINEL, December 18, 1882.
21. FORT WAYNE GAZETTE, April 29, 1886.



04/14/2008

129362 1 161 00



HF GROUP - IN

